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With the Compliments of

James Green

ARISTOTLE'S

MUSICAL PROBLEMS

EDITED BY

DR. J. C. VOLLGRAFF AND PROF. F. A. GEVAERT

A PAPER PRESENTED BY JAMES GREEN, A.M.,
AT THE MEETING OF THE AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY,
APRIL, 1903

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ARISTOTLE'S

MUSICAL PROBLEMS

A NEW EDITION

WITH PHILOLOGICAL NOTES BY JOHANN C. VOLLGRAFF, PH. D.,
PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF UTRECHT, AND A MUSICAL
COMMENTARY BY FRANÇOIS-AUGUSTE GEVAERT,
DIRECTOR OF THE ROYAL CONSERVATORY
OF BRUSSELS

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY, BY
JAMES GREEN, A.M., OF WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS,
AND PRINTED IN THE SOCIETY'S PROCEEDINGS,
APRIL 29, 1903

Worcester, Mass.
PRESS OF CHARLES HAMILTON.
1903.

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ARISTOTLE'S MUSICAL PROBLEMS.

Vice-President HOAR said :—

I make this communication in behalf of a friend in Worcester, Mr. James Green. Mr. Green is a very accurate and thorough investigator of any subject in which he is interested. He is a nephew of our late associate Dr. John Green, and the brother of our two valued associates, Mr. Samuel S. Green, and Dr. John Green of St. Louis. Mr. Green is very much interested in a matter to which he calls the attention of the Society, namely, the edition of Aristotle's *Musical Problems*, lately published in Belgium, with the Greek text on one page and a French translation opposite, and the musical commentary by the director of the Royal Conservatory in Brussels. Mr. Green calls attention to the fact that this work of Aristotle, so well edited by our associate, is the earliest publication of a scientific character, if not of any character, in regard to music, in existence; and he gives an account of the elucidation and illustration of that text by three scholars working together upon it. Mr. Green endeavored to find some student of music in the Society, who would present this paper with appropriate comments, but the only musician in the Society as far as I have been able to learn, who has any practical as well as theoretical knowledge of it, is the President. I understand the President, and he will correct me if I am wrong, once gave a musical entertain-

ment in Spain to a very large and highly appreciative and highly pleased audience. I desire, therefore, to communicate this paper of Mr. James Green, with the book, to the Society, and ask that it may be referred to the Committee of Publication, and that the paper with such account of the book as may be added be published at their discretion in our Proceedings, and if the President shall be willing to illustrate it in any way from his own experience, that may also be added.

To the Honorable GEORGE F. HOAR,

Vice-President of the American Antiquarian Society.

Sir :—

May I have the pleasure of calling your attention, and that of the members of your Society, to an edition of Aristotle's "Musical Problems" lately published in Belgium,—the Greek text on one page and a French translation opposite, followed by Philological Notes by Dr. Johann C. Vollgraff, your learned Associate Member of the Antiquarian Society, and a Musical Commentary by M. François-Auguste Gevaert, Director of the Royal Conservatory of Brussels. The book contains nearly 450 pages, beautifully printed, in octavo, and was published at Ghent in three parts, in 1899, 1901 and 1903,—(Librairie Générale de Ad. Hoste, Éditeur.) Although your Society confines its official work chiefly to American antiquities, I know that you are interested also in classical antiquity.

The nineteenth section of Aristotle's "Problems," as you know, contains about fifty "Musical Problems," said by Professor Wagener to be "the oldest text known today which is especially devoted to music. The grammarian

under the Roman Empire," he adds, "who copied this musical document in the general collection of the Aristotelian problems, apparently had no comprehension of what he was copying." That the musical problems were the work of Aristotle himself has been doubted by some scholars, but our present editors hold stoutly to the belief in Aristotle's authorship. The antiquity of the text, however, seems not to have been called into question. The manuscript appears to have suffered exceptionally in copying and to be full of errors of every sort. The present edition has been under study for a full generation.

It was in the winter of 1870–71 that Auguste Wagener, Professor of Greek at the University of Ghent and a devoted lover of music, called the book to the attention of M. Gevaert, the Inspector of the Academy of Music at Paris, who had left Paris at the time of the Siege and was then living temporarily at Ghent near the place of his birth; and suggested to M. Gevaert that they should study the book together,—"one of them a musician imbued with philology, and the other a philologist devoted to music." In March, 1871, the Commune was proclaimed at Paris and the Opera remained closed, and M. Gevaert was soon afterward named Director of the Royal Conservatory of Brussels and Musical Conductor to the King of Belgium. He was a born musician, a baker's son who sang his tuneful dreams as he worked at his trade, and who won the Belgian "Prize of Rome" for musical composition, when only eighteen years old. He had written operas before he came to full age, had afterwards composed a dozen pieces for the musical stage, and was now writing a book on "The History and Theory of the Music of Antiquity."

The duties of his new office were arduous at first, and all of his time left free from teaching at the Conservatory and leading the Orchestra was devoted to this book; so that it was nearly ten years from the time the plan was formed before M. Gevaert was free to undertake this new study. M. Wagener was also deeply occupied with the administration of the University of Ghent in addition to his professorial duties; but in 1881 the two friends got together again and plotted out their work. The first thing to do was to correct the Greek text which was manifestly corrupt and sometimes out of its proper sequence. This part of the work fell naturally to Professor Wagener. Then followed the translation into French by both the editors separately. Afterwards the special study of the musical side of the problems fell principally to M. Gevaert, who wanted to show the resemblances and the great differences between the old Hellenic music and that of modern Europeans. Hardly had the two professors begun their work when Wagener was elected to the Belgian Legislature and entered with enthusiasm upon his new parliamentary duties, without giving up his work at the University. This brought the projected book suddenly to an apparent end; and M. Gevaert occupied himself with other studies in preparation for another book,—"La Mélopée Antique dans le Chant de l'Église Latine,"—which was published in 1894.

Wagener had now left Parliament, but was still Professor and Administrator at the University of Ghent, and his health was a good deal broken. Again the two friends came together and agreed to go on with their common work. But at the close of their first consultation, Professor Wag-

ener said with infinite sadness, "Really, my friend, I find I am not strong enough to carry out my part of the work alone. I must have help. I have in my mind a young and very capable associate whom you know by name at least, M. Vollgraff, Professor at the University of Brussels. He is a philologist by profession, a strict grammarian, in every way the man that you need in case I disappear before the end of the work. You two together would complete the volume to perfection. Do you want me to bring him the next time I have business at Brussels?"

This new arrangement was made. M. Vollgraff gained the musician's sympathy at once. He was found to be a constant attendant at the concerts of the Conservatory, and a great admirer of Bach, Beethoven, Händel and Glück. The three friends worked together diligently for a few months, but Wagener had come into the work too late and was already passing away. His mind dwelt constantly on this book until January, 1896, when he was no longer allowed to see his friends. How well he had chosen his successor in the Greek Professor's part, the book bears eloquent testimony.

The three collaborators were Dutchmen. Johann Christoph Vollgraff was born at The Hague, in 1848. He studied six years at the University of Leyden, where he won his doctorate of classical philology in 1870. Later, he travelled in Italy, collating manuscripts of Aristophanes at Venice, and others at Ravenna and in the Vatican Library, and attending lectures in the German School of Archæology and the Museums of Rome. Afterwards he travelled in Greece. After teaching the Greek classics and Roman antiquities in Holland, he was a professor of

Classical philology at the University of Brussels for twenty years, from 1883 to 1903. Now he has returned to his native Holland, and has lately become the successor of Dr. van Herwerden, his old instructor and friend, the eminent Greek scholar and lexicographer, in the chair of Greek letters and antiquities in the University of Utrecht. He is an Associate Member of the Royal Academy of Belgium, Corresponding Member of the Imperial German Archæological Institute, Member of the Philological Society of Constantinople, and of several Dutch societies. Besides coöperating with van Herwerden on an edition of the Helena of Euripides, he has published various pamphlets in the line of his studies, a list of some of which is here appended; but his time for the past twenty years has been spent chiefly in the lecture-room at the University.

JAMES GREEN.

Worcester, Massachusetts, April 29, 1903.

PROFESSOR VOLLGRAFF'S PUBLICATIONS.

Studia Palæographica.—Disputatio litteraria inauguralis. Lugduni Batavorum, 1870.

Greek Writers of Roman History. Some Reflections upon the Authorities of Plutarch and Appianus. Leyden, 1880.

L' essence et la méthode de la philologie classique. Discours prononcé à l'ouverture de son cours à l'Université de Bruxelles, le 14 Novembre, 1883.

M. Tullii Ciceronis pro M. Cælio Oratio ad iudices. Ad optimos codices denuo collatos recognovit I. C. Vollgraff. Accessit appendix critica. Lugduni Batavorum apud E. I. Brill, 1887.

Nekrolog von Dr. Hermann Müller-Strübing in Bursian's *Jahresberichten*, 1897.

Numerous critical studies and essays on Greek writers in the *Mnemosyne*, Review of classical philology. (Leyden.)

Papers read in the Royal Belgian Academy.

Les Problèmes Musicaux d' Aristote.